February 26, 2022.

Your negotiating team has met at the bargaining table with the University six times. We have six more negotiating sessions scheduled on March 16, 18, 21, 22, 23 and 25.

We are still negotiating with the Vic administration on language provisions. Although we have come to agreement with the University on several language issues, as of today we have been unable to reach agreement on a number of issues important to many members.

We expect to begin negotiating the monetary aspects of the collective agreement during the week of March 21. We should not assume that the University will be agreeable to the maximum amount of wage and benefit increases allowed by the Conservative’s Bill 124. More than ever before, we need to show our union solidarity and strength. The best ways to do that are to use and display your union gear in the workplace, vote in favour of a strike mandate and talk to your colleagues about the importance of supporting the union bargaining team. In the coming weeks, members of the Strike Committee will be distributing union hats, coffee tumblers and other items.

**Strike Mandate Vote**

As in previous rounds of collective bargaining, Victoria University USW members will have the opportunity to cast a ballot in a strike mandate vote and let the University administration know that they need to be serious about bargaining fair employment terms, including wage and benefit increases. Your “yes” vote will contribute to a strong strike mandate and it will give your negotiating team the right to call for job action, if necessary, as of 12:01 a.m. Saturday, March 31. Job action can take various forms, the most well-known being a general work stoppage or strike. But there are other options, including work to rule and rotating walk-outs.

Your negotiating team will work hard to reach a settlement with the University without resorting to job action, but the University needs to know that the Union’s negotiating team has the support of the membership. You have the opportunity to show your support for your negotiating team by voting “Yes” on a strike mandate ballot.

**A strong strike mandate is essential in achieving a fair and reasonable collective agreement. Local 1998 has a long history of negotiating good contracts without calling a strike or even limited job action, but that has been accomplished with strong strike mandates.**

Our union colleagues at U of T recently won gains in their collective agreement. Their excellent results were, in part, due to the membership voting 90% in favour of a strike mandate. Let’s get an even better vote result here at Vic.

**Strike Mandate Vote**

**In-person Voting on the Vic Campus**

Please bring at least one piece of identification.

**Date:** Friday, March 18

**Time:** 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

**Location:** Old Vic, Alumni Hall

**Date:** Saturday, March 19

**Time:** 11:00a.m.– 2:00 p.m.

**Location:** Old Vic, Alumni Hall

**Online Voting**

**Date:** Monday, March 21

**Time:** 9:00 a.m. – 11:59 p.m.

Members who do not cast a ballot in person will be sent an email that includes a digital link for online voting.

If you are not receiving the Union’s email communications, please send an email to john.ankeman@usw1998.ca

The wording on the strike mandate ballot will read, “Are you in favour of giving the Negotiating Committee the right to call for job action, up to and including a strike, if necessary?”

**Join with your USW colleagues and use your vote to put the power of the membership behind your negotiating team. Vote “Yes” on March 18, 19 and 21.**

In solidarity,

John Ankenman, Chris Greenwood, Wanda Hughes, Tom DeSousa (USW Staff Representative)